

**REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES**

November 2, 2005

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Snodgrass, Commissioners Allen, Hinman, McCarthy, Parnell, Petitpas, Query

STAFF PRESENT: Lori Peckol and Gary Lee, Redmond Planning Department; Kurt Seemann, Public Works Department

RECORDING SECRETARY: Karen Nolz

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Snodgrass in the Public Safety Building Council Chambers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting summary of October 26, 2005 was approved by acclamation.

ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Bob Yoder, 10019 169th Avenue NE, presented some overheads regarding the riparian habitat issue on which the Planning Commissioners voted 4-3 against at the previous meeting. He was amazed that the Planning Commission voted against this issue when the Technical Committee recommended in favor of it. He continued that most people do not know what riparian means, but those who are aware would know that the Critical Areas Ordinance takes care of this. He requested that the Planning Commission reconsider this issue. He asked that the original staff definition be used and not that with bracketed information included.

Lori Peckol, Principal Planner, explained that she had conferred with City Attorney Jim Haney who clarified that they could move to reconsider the last motion regarding the proposed amendment to the Development Guide to update the critical area maps, which was made by Commissioner Parnell and passed by a 7-0 vote.

It was moved by Commissioner Allen and seconded by Commissioner Query to reconsider Commissioner Parnell's last motion from the October 26, 2005 Planning Commission meeting. The motion carried by a majority vote (4-3), with Commissioners Snodgrass, McCarthy and Parnell voting against the motion. The Planning Commission agreed to resume discussion of the motion at one of their meetings later in November.

PUBLIC HEARING

2005 Downtown Development Guide Amendment

Chair Snodgrass opened the public hearing at 7:15 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Commissioner McCarthy to lead this topic.

Gary Lee, Senior Planner, presented the staff report, giving a brief overview of the proposal to update the Development Guide regulations and bring the design standards into consistency with the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan Downtown Element. He gave a brief summary of the proposed amendments.

There was discussion about changes to the parking regulations. He passed out the current and existing parking regulations, which replaced those provided in the packets. He noted the staff-recommended change to require a minimum ceiling height of 13 feet for ground floor commercial space. The reason for doing this is that having a minimum standard for ceiling height helps assure that Redmond will be able to have high-quality commercial space on the lower floor. Lower ceiling heights could limit the types of uses to those less desirable or sub-par to long-range uses. He also reported that he had presented the proposed pedestrian map to the Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee, and found that the committee members were in favor of the map. He noted that Dennis Cope with the Design Review Board was present to talk about the Board's review of the design standards.

Michael Nelson, Nelson Properties at Redmond Center, 16508 NE 79th Street, talked about Footnote 1 on Exhibit A, and explained the history of his affected lots. In 1999, the City approved changing Lots 9-10 for which he had a drawing. The City is now proposing to change the zoning and design district from Trestle to Sammamish Trail, which Nelson Properties is in favor of as long as the footnote reflects an exception for additional parking. His three requests were: (1) to make sure that parking flexibility under the old regulations is retained; (2) to make sure that the parcels are described accurately so that all four are covered, and (3) to receive clarification on the design standards relative to building and parking location.

There was no other public testimony, so at 7:45 p.m. Commissioner McCarthy continued the public hearing to November 9. Further comments must be received by November 9.

Dennis Cope, Vice Chair of the Design Review Board, reported that the Design Review Board was encouraged by the proposed updates to the Downtown design standards because the update clarified the intent and expectations of the standards by which the Design Review Board does its reviews. The Board members thought the way these regulations were written and illustrated was very informative to the Design Review Board, designers and developers, and would help them understand the intent of the community in which they are serving. They also thought the revisions to the map to be helpful and much more accurate to the real conditions and the intent. The standards do achieve the goals of the City to be much more pedestrian friendly in the downtown. He added that the Board members also appreciated the opportunity to weigh in with their opinions. He clarified that the Board reviewed only Exhibit B.

Commissioner Hinman inquired if the Design Review Board members were concerned about the proposed three-foot grade separation between the first floor and street on the ground floor residential in certain portions of downtown (Exhibit B, page 39).

Mr. Cope responded that they thought this was acceptable and appropriate for the recommended locations. He noted that it does make exception for units accessible to those with disabilities, but perhaps adding provisions that speak to senior-friendly residential would be helpful. He encouraged preserving the concept and then adjusting it for these exceptions, rather than doing away with the concept.

Commissioner Querry wanted to know the DRB members' opinion about calling out the type of façade materials and colors (Exhibit B, page 28).

Mr. Cope answered that the Board liked this section of the proposed standards. They liked the wording and the guidance, as well as the palette, and thought a lot of variety was offered to designers. If they preferred colors not included in the preferred palette, they would have warning that they would have some work to do with staff and the Design Review Board. If conditions change with respect to desired materials, this section of the standards could be changed at that time.

Commissioner Allen inquired why masonry materials might be preferred over wooden shingles or others in a residential district.

Mr. Cope explained that in a residential district there could certainly be some other applications. The DRB members liked that it does exclude concrete blocks, and does not seem to exclude wood.

Chair Snodgrass suggested eliminating these provisions from Exhibit A, Zoning Standards, and having it only in Exhibit B, Design Standards. He inquired if rather than specifying limiting street façades to high-quality masonry it would be appropriate to say high-quality materials, and leave it up to the developer.

Mr. Cope thought that using the term “high-quality materials” would be fine.

Chair Snodgrass asked the Design Review Board’s opinion about having 13-foot minimum first floor in mixed use developments.

Mr. Cope responded that they did not see this as a burden for the developer, as long as it did not take away from the other floors, and they liked this because it would result in buildings that are visually different.

The meeting was turned over to Chair Snodgrass.

DISCUSSION, DESIGN OF BEAR CREEK PARKWAY EXTENSION

Kurt Seemann, Senior Engineer, began the presentation on this three-lane section from the area around the Workshop Tavern west to 159th and north through Redmond Center. He confirmed that the Workshop Tavern would need to be removed with completion of the project. He explained that the City is doing a preliminary 30% design in this phase of the project. The 100% design will be completed next spring.

Paul Fuesel with KPG reviewed the key project objectives. He explained that this is more than a street project, as it is a downtown enhancement project providing open space connections, trails and pedestrian/bicycle connections, transit connections, connections among downtown districts, and street connections. He showed the roadway alignment, and explained that there are two additional parcels to buy from existing businesses. The project includes preserving and enhancing the heron rookery by adding more natural open space. Redevelopment will include connections to complete the street grid. He explained that the roadway is called a parkway because it is very passive in its use. The buildings that face onto it on one side are quiet office buildings, and Town Center open space is on the other side. He noted that the edge of the heron rookery is also passive.

Commissioner Petitpas has suggested that staff make certain the names of the streets are legible when the map goes out to the public.

Commissioner Parnell supported park uses for the Burlington-Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF) right-of-way, and suggested considering the opportunities for activating or enhancing the space on Leary Way as a gateway. He suggested having a pedestrian overpass on Leary Way that would provide a visual impression of movement from one end of town to another.

Commissioner Querry encouraged staff and the consultants to look at the intent and policies for gateways in the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Hinman agreed that a gateway could be done at the “T” formed by Bear Creek Parkway and Leary Way.

Commissioner McCarthy noted the challenge developers would have to activate whatever development goes in there to both sides—the right-of-way and the street.

In response to Chair Snodgrass' inquiry if staff is making any assumptions about the BNSF right-of-way, Mr. Seemann said that staff would like to broaden the scope of the project and consider the BNSF right-of-way, but the actual scope currently leaves the BNSF right-of-way out of the project. Chair Snodgrass emphasized that he wanted to make sure the BNSF right-of-way is being considered for the future and that nothing is being done that would preclude that inclusion.

Mr. Seemann assured Chair Snodgrass that they were comparing four alternatives. He added that an important part of the work that KPG is contracted to do is to come up with a more accurate estimate of these costs by the end of the 30% design.

Joe Giacobazzi with KPG explained that KPG's proposal is that the existing Bear Creek Parkway stays as it is today.

Mr. Seemann reported that there is a plan for a midway crossing on the east-west portion of Bear Creek Parkway into Redmond Center, but this is not included in the scope of work now.

Chair Snodgrass encouraged them to consider the completion of the connection between Redmond Town Center and the open space to the south, and ultimately Marymoor.

Mr. Giacobazzi responded that they are evaluating signals at the existing Bear Creek Parkway crossing into Redmond Town Center.

Commissioner Allen inquired about what is in place to ease backup traffic on the existing Bear Creek Parkway onto Redmond Way.

Mr. Giacobazzi answered that the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is adding a third eastbound ramp on East Lake Sammamish Parkway to SR 202, and ultimately that third lane needs to run up to that Bear Creek Parkway intersection. There are now three lanes west into town and two lanes eastbound, but that should be reversed. The restriction is the Bear Creek Parkway crossing. The WSDOT is trying to get approval for that. Don Cairns has been working closely with the WSDOT to encourage inclusion of this in the project.

There were mixed feelings among the Planning Commissioners about parallel parking and a sidewalk on the south side of Leary Way. Mr. Giacobazzi explained that there may be some funding requirements there for pedestrian provision on both sides of the street. From a trail user's perspective, there probably should be public parking available.

Chair Snodgrass supported reversible lanes rather than five lanes if needed to provide for increases in traffic.

Mr. Seemann responded that they are operating under the concept that the roadways the City builds now are appropriate for the future. Staff in the Transportation Division has spent a great deal of time understanding the traffic modeling, and are confident they have a roadway section that is the appropriate one to build.

Mr. Giacobazzi explained that successful downtowns need to have a certain amount of congestion to be successful. There is an acceptable amount of congestion during peak hours that makes this work. There is a healthy level of congestion for Redmond. The consultants and Transportation Division staff are

confident that this is going to work to make Downtown Redmond a healthy, vibrant downtown. More than this proposed solution should be done on a regional basis.

Chair Snodgrass wanted to know why Bear Creek Parkway should be completed before decoupling the couplet.

Mr. Giacobazzi answered that there need to be other improvements that are associated with that to make it work. There would need to be alternative routes to get through town while that is going on. They modeled decoupling the couplet first, and could not get that to work—the result was gridlock. He added that decoupling would be complicated, and would probably take more than a year to do.

Chair Snodgrass commented that if this is done right the City would have something about which to be proud. The proposed project seems to reflect the philosophy adopted in the Transportation Master Plan of making streets more than simply places for traffic by using them to enhance the downtown liveability and the pedestrian friendliness of the area. He encouraged the Transportation staff and KPG that they are on the right track.

Commissioner Query concurred and encouraged Transportation staff to consider rubberized road surface materials to make the roads quieter and more pedestrian friendly, to use pervious concretes that are available for trail surfaces and roadways closer to water features, and to be creative in the materials used to make this a less environmentally impacting expanse of pavement.

STUDY SESSION

2005 Downtown Development Guide Amendments

Commissioner McCarthy presided over this discussion. The following items were added to the issues table:

- Parking regulations
- New recommendation for the minimum ceiling height
- Should vs. shall ground floor residential standards
- Examine different materials allowed for the rest of the building
- Mandate of materials
- A placeholder for Mr. Nelson's footnote change

Burlington-Northern/Santa Fe Corridor: There was discussion about the BNSF corridor access and development and requiring buildings to front onto that at this point, because of concerns about requiring 13-foot ceilings and requiring garages and storefronts to face the right-of-way corridor.

Mr. Lee explained that all parking in downtown would be on the surface or above in parking structures, and not underground. Commissioner Parnell added later that water is underneath downtown, which prevents underground parking.

The Planning Commission decided to put a hold on this issue and requested input from staff, as follows:

- The idea of centralized parking
- The City providing structured parking
- The location of parking structures facing the BNSF right-of-way; how does that fit with the overall vision for that corridor
- An explanation about the potential conflict, if not contradiction, regarding 1-A—what should orient to the right-of-way, and 2-B—parking allowed on the parkway
- The answer to the question of whether it is realistic to require no ground floor parking

Ms. Peckol replied that structured parking is a very large topic that would require either the City and/or property owners committing to provide structured parking for that to go forward. She thought this was beyond the scope of the current process.

Mr. Lee responded that staff understands this is a sensitive issue. Staff does not want to see open parking garages, but instead wants them to be screened architecturally with ornamental grillwork.

Transitional Overlay Zone: Industrial and commercial zones require a buffer between them and residential zones. Staff is recommending doing away with buffer requirement. There was agreement to eliminate that regulation.

Cooperative and Shared Parking: There was agreement not to allow individuals to put up private signs that identify specific stores with specific parking. There was agreement to retain the regulation as written.

The study session closed at 9:35 p.m. The meeting was turned over the Chair Snodgrass.

OTHER REPORTS

Ms. Peckol distributed a copy of Terry Marpert's report to City Council on Sound Transit, Phase 2. She announced that there would be an open house on this topic on November 16 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Senior Center.

SCHEDULED TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

- North Redmond Citizens Action Committee's Final Recommendations
- Update on those portions of the Transportation Master Plan that relate to the North Redmond Neighborhood Plan (Joel Pfundt)
- Procedure for responding to emails to the Planning Commission

ADJOURN

Chair Snodgrass adjourned the meeting at 9:49 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Recording Secretary:
